

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

NO. 399. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 22, 1876. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PHOEBE: GIRL AND WIFE.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD,
AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN," "THE SECOND
MRS. TILLOTSON," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLII. A PLAN.

PHOEBE'S worn and agitated face told all to her mother; but there was one waiting to see her, whose affection was to bring her comfort. The faithful Tom Dawson was there to catch her in his rough arms, and give her a hearty embrace.

"Here's our new little married woman!" he cried. "Why, what's the matter, though? What's happened?"

She told her story with much agitation.

"The old malignant bully!" cried Tom in a rage; "I'll make him go down on his knees and beg your pardon. He ought to be proud of having such a daughter. How dare he insult my sister? I'll go to him, and hold a riding-whip over him until he settles a handsome sum on you both."

"Oh, Tom, that sort of thing won't do, I fear," said his mother, gravely. "We must go to work very differently. He must be made to settle something; they can't be let to starve. It couldn't be tolerated a moment."

"That's true," said Tom, reflectively; "why the parish would interfere. So they will do very well. I'll see that Phoebe is comfortable. Has he got you the house yet, Phib?"

At this point entered the worried husband, who looked sourly and suspiciously at Tom, with whom he always associated some very humiliating memories of compulsion and indignity.

After their greeting it was Tom who said, in his off-hand way, "Now, you'll

have to set to work with the furnishing. That will amuse Phib."

"It is easy to talk of that," said the other, looking darkly at him; "who is to find the money, I should like to know?"

"You, of course," said Tom, with a loud laugh. "You are now a responsible man, in charge of a pretty young woman, and you'll have to make it out. Use your head, man, and your wits. If I was in your place how soon I'd make my father be reconciled to me, whether he liked it or not! There are ways of doing it."

"Yes, if you exert yourself," said the mother-in-law. "Speak to them firmly, and insist on your rights, on some provision being made for yourself and your wife—"

"I don't want to be lectured," he answered.

"We don't want to do so, but only to stir you up. Come along with me, and we'll look at the house and see about the furniture. I can lend you something, and you can get credit for the rest. You must see, my boy, it won't do to be eating both your heads off at a first-class hotel, where a week's bill would keep you for a month at home. We must look after Phib, you know, so come along."

Irresolute between his wounded pride and the temptation of assistance thus offered, Mr. Pringle could only look gloomy and defiant, and said he would see about it. Later in the day Tom took out his sister and mother in a cab, and Phoebe did not return till rather late, when she entered with her old smiles and in the greatest spirits. All through dinner she continued thus smiling and looking most knowing and sagacious, rather puzzling Mr. Pringle, and again

putting him out of humour. Suddenly it flashed upon him there was here a little secret or surprise. Could it be that they had gone off and brought about what would make him so happy—had there been a reconciliation? After all, he thought, the mother and Tom were persons of power, and could contrive what they desired to do.

Instantly he became eager to know.

"Come," he said, smiling, "tell me. You have been at some little adventure. Tell me, now? What is it?"

Again Phoebe's face was all a ripple of smiles and enjoyment.

"Well! there is a secret," she said; "but I am not to tell you—at least till to-morrow."

Here Mr. Pringle assumed some of those now old coaxing graces which Phoebe had found so irresistible.

"Oh," said she, in delight at this renewal, "I can't have any secrets from you. Do you know that everything is settled so charmingly? You are to have no trouble."

"What," he said, in delight, "you have seen them?"

"Yes," she said. "The house is taken—such a sweet little house—and we were all day in Tottenham-court-road ordering the furniture, and it will be home to-morrow."

She was startled at the gesture of rage with which he jumped up. It was too disappointing for the luckless Pringle. A storm of impatience broke upon Phoebe's head—her childish folly and stupidity, and infantine ways. It was, indeed, aggravating enough. But it was a good specimen of Phoebe's character, which was truly Celtic. She could not forecast, and the pleasure of the moment or the simple hope for the future was, with her, a permanence. That scene, and that night, indeed, at the Jermyn-street hotel she did not soon forget; it was the first serious "scald" her tender skin had received from the matrimonial kettle.

With the following day Mr. Pringle went to his mother-in-law's house, to deliver himself of a protest against the liberty that had been taken with his dignity.

Mrs. Dawson was quite calm and business-like: "Believe me, it's the wisest course. And, for goodness' sake, make no bother about these things. Only the well-off can afford to be sensitive; so do not be worrying yourself and that poor child; you will kill her if you

give her much of that kind of thing. Do be good-humoured and rational—we are only trying to pull you out of this scrape."

He could not resist saying, "Which you got me into——"

"And what matter now," she said, "as the thing is done? The great point now is—not this foolish bickering—but to get bread and butter. What do you propose to do? Will you go to your family?"

"I'd sooner beg; and it's no use."

"I should say not. I really think the best way would be to leave it to Tom—he has a way of doing these things."

This was unintentional, but Mr. Pringle winced.

"If anything can be done, he will do it; and he is ready to go at once. Now, don't begin with any sensitiveness; but you must say yes or no. Do it yourself, or let him do it."

As a matter of course it was settled that Tom Dawson should do it, and he set off cheerily. Everyone was so confident in the success of Tom's abilities that it was fully expected he would bring back news of a complete amnesty. Tom, however, returned with a rather "long" face. The family had left town that morning. What was to be done now? Tom declared that he would leave town too. He had some racing and other engagements to be first attended to, but, these disposed of, he would undertake the embassy.

CHAPTER XLIII. THE PRINGLES AT HOME.

JOLIFFE'S COURT, to which ancestral spot we shall now attend the Sam Pringles, was a very imposing mansion, in some disrepair, but richly timbered, and having a fine demesne, gardens, &c. It was, in short, eminently suited—in house-agents' language—for a nobleman or gentleman's family. Mrs. Pringle and the ponies were enchanted as they patrolled the gardens. Old Sam took on him the airs of an ancient signor who had received rents all his life. Having been an agent so recently, he was well suited to understanding the relationship of his tenants, the value of his holdings, &c.; and was already concerting measures for "increasing the rental, and developing the resources of the estate." This was delightful occupation, though there was a drawback in that presence of the Old Woman of the Sea, Lady Juliana, who surveyed the whole, with nose in the

air, contemptuously, and said a disagreeable thing about once every half hour. It was really amusing to see the despotism with which she ruled over the family, her switch being a venomous tongue, which they knew perfectly well she would wag in all directions when she returned to town, should they quarrel with her. Mrs. Pringle, therefore, and her two ponies, accepted the trial with such resignation as they could muster. This unpleasant person, when visitors arrived at the Court, and found her seated in the drawing-room, took care to inform them who she was—she was no relation of the family, though they might naturally suppose she was one of the Pringle dependents—she had taken them out in London, introduced them to nice people, and so on.

Joliffe's Court, when the Pringles had left for the Continent, had been put into the hands of a cloud of decorators, builders, and upholsterers, and had been "done up," regardless not merely of expense but of taste. The walls glowed with golden embossed papers, after the favourite mediæval patterns; the halls and passages glittered with brazen "standards" for gas; while every room was crowded with heavy antique cabinets—all made within the year—which the eminent upholsterers filled with suitable Japanese ware and elegant bronzes. Of course any surface that could be tiled was made to glow and flare—was profusely diapered in gaudy patterns; while Persian carpets of extraordinary size and thickness covered the floors.

A great band of servants was enrolled; and a grand housekeeper, who had lived with a duke, consented to undertake the charge of the establishment.

But all this state was dull enough. The Pringles found themselves solitary in their grandeur, and not nearly so happy, or at least so excited, as in their days of struggle. By-and-by, however, there was to be some enjoyment, for they were going to "fill their house" so soon as the fortress had been properly victualled and fitted; though, indeed, with some persons, this "filling a house" is about as difficult a task as the Danaïd ladies found the filling of their pitchers. The only inducement to be offered was a week's board, as at an hotel. It is a good deal to the credit of a rational world, that it is not to be decoyed into such places by the inducement of free entertainment for man and beast, when nothing

else is present. A helpless, heavy, and opulent family are often at their wits' ends, begging persons to come and stay with them; those who have accepted, "shirking" the task before them at the eleventh hour on some feeble pretext; while the hosts have to scour the by-lanes, and secure such second-hand guests as they can pick up. On this unpleasant course were the Pringles now about to enter—making acquaintance with the hope that maketh the heart sick. However, this was all before them, and they did not as yet know of these troubles. "You must come and stay with us at Joliffe's Court" had been their song at many parties—an invitation received with much smiling and pleasant "Delighted, I am sure!" the surety, however, being of the most precarious kind. In a happy unconsciousness of what was coming, the Pringles made up some brilliant lists, "shot," as is some rich silk, with lords and ladies, and baronets, and members of parliament, making great difficulties indeed about admitting any of the vulgar threads into their woof.

"You won't have one of these people," said the comforting Lady Juliana. "Lord bless you! I know well how it turns out; unless you have a house known to be an agreeable one. People won't take a journey to be bored, you know!" On which the Pringles would look with a smiling helplessness at each other, not knowing exactly what to reply, though full of bitterness at heart. Then old Sam, who had begun to hate her with a deadly detestation, said to her:

"The Lady Juliana Job ought to be your name, ma'am!"

"And no one would ever mistake you for a Chesterfield!" retorted the lady.

"Lord forbid!" replied he.

This was usually during the deal at cards; for both Lady Juliana and Mr. Pringle enjoyed the game with a greedy pleasure, both playing, indeed, with professional skill. Mrs. Pringle and the ponies detested it, and loathed the hour which brought this enforced service, when, till near midnight, they had to endure corrections and revilings from the two experienced hands.

Of course there was great anxiety to become acquainted with the neighbouring nobility and gentry, and a prodigious deal of calling and leaving of cards. Their next-door neighbours, as it were, were the Homertons of Toplow, an old and old-

fashioned "top-booted" family, "As stiff and proud as if," said old Sam, "they were all white neckcloth." They were rich, reserved, secluded; and Sir Gilbert Homerton was, perhaps, a little eccentric. It was certainly unlucky for people so ambitious as were the Pringles, that they should have been set down in so exclusive a district. A few came and called on them, not many; but it curiously came about that they met the whole tribe of Homertons one morning at another house, and so an introduction was unavoidable. Sir Gilbert wore a high description of gills, so tight and formal, as somehow to give the idea of the neck of a duck; and this was attended by drab trousers with fob. His wife and daughters were meagre, ungainly persons, whose stiffness, originally engendered by pride, had been intensified by seclusion. Everyone admitted the good blood and antiquity of the Homertons of Toplow. Various high personages came down specially to stay with them, and to be dreadfully bored, out of compliment to the blood. But no one was more or so much respected than Sir Gilbert Homerton of Toplow. A person of such consideration, as it were, innoculated the district.

But all the energy displayed by the new-comers was in vain, and after a month's residence, the Pringles still found themselves, as regarded acquaintances, in a state of starvation and squalor. Lady Juliana, when this despondency was perceptible, said, over her cards:

"I told you it was not so easy as you fancied. I am afraid you kicked away the ladder a little too soon."

"Perhaps it was not long enough or strong enough, ma'am," said old Sam; "or it may have been a cheap take-in sort of thing."

"I must ask you, Mr. Pringle, not to address your coarse speeches to me—"

"Oh, what?" cried he, in affected astonishment. "So you were speaking of yourself! Oh, I beg pardon."

Notwithstanding the chilliness of their reception by the "county families" the Pringles proceeded to scour the country indefatigably, being in no one's debt a day for a card; for, when their own visit was returned, they hurried out at once to keep the balance even. Still, their advances were barren of results. This treatment was all the more disappointing, as Lord Garterley, who knew everybody, had said to them carelessly, "By-the-way, you have capital neighbours. The Homertons of

Toplow, an only son, and all that. Many of our dowagers would give their eyes for such an opportunity. They are a little embarrassed, but an heiress would clear them, and give them a good twenty thousand a year." The son was a curiously crabbed young fellow as to his taste for sports; rather uncouth; full of book-learning and book-reading; fond of music, shy, and averse from female society. This was not, after all, so unreasonable, considering that the portion of the sex that was drawn to his society was not likely to be attracted by his mental gifts, but by sordid and meaner motives. The Pringles would have seen everything that was charming and captivating in this youth, had an opportunity been given them for doing so. But this was sternly denied them. The Homertons did not want more acquaintances; their life was settled on fixed lines. Every spring, an old dull green chariot, that lay back like an old arm-chair, was despatched to town with servants and horses about as old-fashioned; and the Homertons prepared to spend their two months in town, where a sort of formula—dining with a few old friends, going to court, and other ceremonies—was steadfastly adhered to, and, being completed as a duty, the welcome return to the country was hailed as a relief.

For the Pringles to talk of "breaking the ice" in such a case was an absurdity; as it was ice of the kind that is preserved in vast blocks, and can only be dealt with by saws and axes. Not but that they were courageous enough to make the attempt on that Sunday at church, when the heavy shower came on, and, when the Pringles, taking anxious counsel together, fancied that their favourable opportunity had arrived. The Homertons had an instinct of the offer that was coming, for they drew away in alarm as the family closed in upon them.

"If you would—that is—take our carriage, Sir Gilbert—it could be sent back for us—"

"Or we could all squeeze in, Sir Gilbert," said Sam; "the ladies might sit on the gentlemen's knees."

That low speech, as Mrs. Pringle reproached her husband, settled the matter for ever.

"We had rather not, thank you," was the stiff reply, which was not varied.

"Oh, but if you would," continued Mrs. Pringle, and her daughters, in soft chorus; "you really must."

"Thank you, we had rather not," was again the reply, the old family edging away from the new one.

Having gone so far the latter became desperate, and were frantic in their importunity.

"Oh, but you must take our carriage—"

"I had rather not. Dr. Potts, pray let us go into your vestry."

Which was said so piteously as to mean: "For heaven's sake! save us from these people!"

Such was the attempt at "turning the first sod," in getting on in the country, which so far did not promise well. But such feeble diggers have at least a reserve of perseverance and a valuable absence of sensitiveness; and, undaunted by this snub, they renewed their efforts a little later. It may seem a little monotonous thus dwelling on these Sisyphean-like attempts; but the family felt that the cause was a holy one, and had this much chivalry, that they considered all their wealth and state as quite valueless unless set off by distinguished company and "nice people." "Nice people" was the strange device inscribed upon the banner with which they toiled up their steep and painful ascent.

CHAPTER XLIV. MISS LACROIX ARRIVES.

THE family founded hopes on the clergyman of the parish, Dr. Potts, and his curate, the Rev. Mr. Prettyman.

Dr. Potts was an elderly cleric of the old school, who rode about the country in Hessian boots. He was quiet and easy-going, indisposed to labour, and leaving all to Mr. Prettyman, the energetic, highly-connected, and ritualist curate. This young administrator was always seen in what the profane would style a wide-awake hat, made of the softest and most shapeless black cloth, which seemed in protest against the stiff buckram-like broad-brim, which others with the same views adopt. He was always walking very fast, stopping to talk with, or "bring to book," every one he met; and had for some time been planning a dazzling restoration of the venerable old church, with its dowdy tower and decrepit and patched "body." The grand cathedral restorer had been down, and had declared that for five or six thousand pounds it might be made to blaze with tiles, stained-glass windows, brass standards, and an exquisite reredos. The old rector did not relish the improvement at all; but he was indolent,

and could not make head against the overpowering energy of his eager subordinate, now busy in the parish, stirring up the rustics, who could not be brought to see the matter in its true light, while the old baronet and his family were roused to the deepest disgust and hostility. In the Pringles the intrepid young missionary found the most delightful co-operation. Mrs. Pringle declared that Mr. Pringle would give a large and handsome subscription—secretly glad to have so good an opportunity of thus publicly announcing their importance and position. The young ladies took quite a fancy to Mr. Prettyman, who was, indeed, most lively and agreeable, and could play at Badminton, and brought in spiritual allusions with much neatness and grace. He had also a vast deal of pleasant chit-chat about fashionable religious doings, thus showing the family a region which offered opportunities for getting on—a new and unexpected revelation which really seemed to prove what a desirable and important thing for all was religion. He was to come and stay when the great party assembled, and would certainly be a great addition.

Unfortunately, its prospects were not good. The apologies came pouring in. The young lords and heirs whom the family had met at balls, and even danced with, declined curtly. However, Lord Garterley said he would try and come; Pratt-Hawkins "would have much pleasure," and so would also the invariable and unfailing Charles Webbers, with some plain, sober, decent "Adelphi guests," as they might be called. Alas! this was not exactly what the Pringles looked for, and it did seem perverse and annoying that, with power of drawing unlimited cheques, of richly entertaining humanity with every kind of luxury and inducement, humanity—of at least the proper kind—should not come. This was a most extraordinary phenomenon, and the family became very despondent in consequence. Mrs. Pringle and the ponies said that it was all owing to the buffooning freedom of old Sam, who frightened away every genteel person; while Sam declared that they had no sense or knowledge, and didn't know how to manage the thing, and that Miss Lacroix had more wit in her little finger than "the whole trio" put together. The family were nettled by these reproaches, and, with many contemptuous sniffings, declared that they did not want her there, and, that she was not exactly the person

to be asked to meet their friends. It was impossible to have persons of that kind, picked up abroad, no one knowing who they were, or where they came from.

"I really couldn't receive her here," said Mrs. Pringle.

Thus, from being quietly discussed, it came to be a sort of bone of contention. Sam, in his moments of good-humour, would remind them of the promised visit, and say, "Now do write to her, and tell her to fix her own day. She'll waken us up a bit." But there were various excuses made, until Sam began to turn malicious and dangerous.

"I think you'd better do it at once; for you know you'll have to do it."

Mrs. Pringle felt it was time to be decided. She was very different now from the long-suffering wife, struggling to make ends meet.

"I repeat I couldn't receive her here," said Mrs. Pringle; "she's not the sort of person for us."

"Oh, I see," said Sam, with a twinkle of his eye; "the cat's jumping that way, is it?"

"I don't pretend to understand your broad allusions," said his lady; "but we cannot have her here—at least, at present."

"Oh, indeed, ma'am!" said Sam, much amused. "Well, now, just write to-day, and remind her that we expect her."

"I will do nothing of the kind, Mr. Pringle."

"No, papa; we really don't want her. She'll only be making up artfully to all the company."

"Well, so much the better for all the company."

"Say no more about it, Mr. Pringle, for it can't be."

Within the week arrived a letter from Miss Lacroix, written in measured style, and thanking Mrs. Pringle for her most kind renewal of the invitation! She would be down with them that evening, if they would kindly send the carriage to the station.

"This is some of his work," said Mrs. Pringle to her daughters—"his" or "he" was always well known to refer to the sire of the household. "It must be put a stop to"—a declaration that had been made times out of mind in reference to Sam's proceedings; but the idea of "putting a stop" to him, or to his doings, was as feasible as checking the eccentric leaps of a firework. With the paper in her hand, she pro-

ceeded to Sam's study, to bring him to account.

"She's coming this evening," said Sam, gleefully. "I've ordered the brougham."

"You have used my name, and, I suppose, forged my writing; it's perfectly scandalous, the way you go on! But I'll not put up with this! I'll just telegraph, to prevent her coming."

"Do it," said Sam, with a Quilp-like deliberation. "Do it, my dear. Work the wire—

Work the wire,
If it's your desire,
Until you tire.

Only, mind, I can do it too."

The victory, such as it was, was of course with Sam, and that evening Miss Lacroix arrived; Mrs. Pringle declaring, however, that she would have the satisfaction of informing the guest that it was on Mr. Pringle's invitation she had come—a threat which Sam received with an "All right."

When Miss Lacroix entered she was received coldly, if not "grumpily," by the ladies. She, however, made herself agreeable, without being obsequious; told them all the news, which showed them that her acquaintances and importance had increased; until it came to nine o'clock, when Lady Juliana, who had been listening disdainfully, rose, and went to the green table, handling the cards impatiently.

"Oh, it's card-time," said the ponies, rising instinctively.

"Oh! this standing bore!" said their mother.

"What, you keep to the old-fashioned custom of a rubber every night?" said Miss Lacroix.

"Yes," said the ponies, ruefully; "Lady Juliana likes it."

"Now, that is being really amiable," said she, innocently. "I fear—I am almost certain—I could not be so unselfish."

"What do you mean, pray?" said Lady Juliana, coming over with hostile intent. "Of course they like it, or they wouldn't do it. You can't know anything about it, you have been here so short a time!"

"I only say this, I can guess that they are not passionate lovers of whist. Am I not right?"

The family did not say anything.

"Oh, there, I don't want people to make martyrs of themselves for me," said Lady Juliana, pettishly, throwing down the cards, and taking up a book.

"Let us have one game—one game,

at least," said Mrs. Pringle, emboldened. But Lady Juliana was affronted. So they had been playing out of compliment to her all this time? A good joke, indeed! Insulted, as it were, the guest declined to play, unless she was formally entreated to do so.

"Well," said Miss Lacroix, "I will help to carry out the fiction, and devote myself to the altar of the infernal gods!"

This unfortunate speech was a fresh outrage, and drove the Lady Juliana "to her chamber," though Miss Lacroix in vain, and with justice, attempted to show that her allusion was to those "books," as they are called, popularly supposed to form the library of the famous "statesman out of place." After this rescue, they felt much more favourably towards their new guest. This sense of having something to interpose between them and the galling tyranny of Lady Juliana made them regard her with sympathy.

ORATORICAL ODDITIES.

CANNING was sure of speaking his best if he rose in an awful funk. To feel his heart beating rapidly, to be frightened at the sound of his own voice, to wish the floor would open and swallow him, were signs to Lord Lytton of an oratorical triumph. Men of ordinary calibre, however, find fright rather a forerunner of failure. The honourable member sticking fast at "Mr. Speaker, I am astonished—" the Congress-man pulled down by a judicious friend with "You're coming out of the hole you went in at!" as soon as he had delivered himself of, "The generality of mankind in general are generally disposed to exercise oppression upon the generality of mankind in general," found that fear, like passion, hangs weights upon the tongue, even if it does not master it quite. Not less painful was the experience of the young aspirant to parliamentary honours, whose maiden effort began and ended with a few incoherent sentences, as a mist rose before his eyes, and the Speaker's wig swelled and swelled until it covered the whole House, and he sank back into his seat, resolved to apply, without delay, for the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds; as convinced that oratory was not his forte as the modest missionary, who told an Exeter Hall audience he could not make a speech, nor sing a song, but should be happy to

show them his arms tattooed by the natives.

This good man's offer shocked some of his hearers, no doubt; but much greater was the dismay created among a more august assemblage, by a right reverend father imprudently announcing his intention of dividing his observations upon a certain bill into twelve parts. Ere the threat could be executed, the Duke of Wharton charitably interposed with a story of a drunken fellow passing St. Paul's as the cathedral clock struck twelve, and after counting the strokes, looking up reproachfully at the clock, exclaimed: "Confound you! why couldn't you give us all that at once?" After that, the peers heard nothing of the bishop's views. Henry Clay dumfounded a wordy opponent, who boasted that he spoke for posterity, by retorting, "Yes, and you seem resolved to speak until your audience arrives!" No adverse comment, pertinent or impertinent, would have stayed the flow of Daniel Webster's eloquence; but he did once "cave in" most ignominiously. Happening to make one of the crowd at a Boston Poultry Show, Daniel stood up in response to a general call, but no sooner had "Ladies and Gentlemen" passed his lips, than a giant Cochin protested with such a frightful crow, that the rebuked orator sat down again without uttering another word. Webster was a great example of the American weakness for speechifying in and out of season, so comically illustrated by Artemus Ward's story of an Ohio execution, when, upon the sheriff asking a murderer if he wished to say anything before he gave the signal to cast off, a local "orator" pushed himself to the front, saying, "If he hasn't, if our ill-starred fellow-citizen don't feel inclined to make a speech, and is in no hurry, I should like to avail myself of the opportunity to make some remarks on the necessity of a new protection tariff!" Whether the ill-starred citizen would have been recompensed for delaying his departure may be doubted, if Ohio orators affect the style of Private Dalzell, "whose aim is Congress, if not more so," of which an American paper lately furnished the following sample: "The south, beautiful as a dark eye in a woman, and garlanded with magnolias, sweeps in like a queen, and sits between the east and west, and their kisses warm their mutual lips, while the tear of reconciliation wets their glorious cheeks. The voice of heaven

makes music among the sheltering branches above us, and the whole camp is wafted on the wings of harmony and peace. The south throws aside the crimson mantle, and in her right hand holds a gleaming sword. The west and east rise up, and the south gracefully redeems her pledge of honourable submission and reconciliation, by surrendering the sword to the west; and the west, true to her pledge, appears, takes the sword from her sister, and sends it ringing home to its scabbard, there to remain until the honour and safety of the three reunited sisters may call it out again for their mutual defence."

When it fell to Canning's lot to respond to the toast of His Majesty's Ministers at Fishmongers' Hall, the company looked for a great speech, and an eloquent exposition of ministerial policy. They were doubly disappointed. Canning had no intention of exposing his hand, and was not in the vein for talking much, and telling nothing, as ministers have a trick of doing. "Gentlemen," said he, "we are invited here to meet the fishmongers. Now the fishmongers have dealings with a very large community, from whose habits I think they might be learning something. I mean the community of fishes. The fish is one of the most uncommunicative animals in creation; it says nothing, and it drinks a good deal. Let us, then, upon the present occasion, as we are to some extent brought into their company, imitate their habits. Let us not waste our time in talking, but drink a good deal." Quite as economical of speech was the candidate who delighted a Nottingham mob by addressing them in this comic fashion: "Ye poets, ye butchers, ye mute inglorious Miltons, ye Cromwells guiltless of your country's blood, give me a welcome to Nottingham! This"—here he held up a sovereign—"this is the god you adore, your faithful, unchangeable friend!" Thereupon one enthusiastic listener shouted, "That's Nottingham to the life!" but when it came to polling, only three votes were recorded for the unflattering orator. Abraham Lincoln proved that it is not always necessary to use tall talk, and plenty of it, to win the suffrages of his countrymen. He made his debut on the political stage with the following speech: "Gentlemen and fellow-citizens, I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a

candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favour of a national bank, of the internal improvement system, and a high protection tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same." Honest Abe did not expect his sincerity would be questioned. Had he done so, he would not have gone into heroics after the manner of the politician who told the men of Arkansas they might build a warm fence around the winter's supply of summer weather, skim the clouds from the sky with a teaspoon, catch a thundercloud in a bladder, break a hurricane to harness, ground-shiver an earthquake, lasso an avalanche, pin a napkin in the crater of an active volcano—but never expect to see him false to his principles. Perhaps, when too late, he found he had overdone the thing, like the old soldier ambitious of entering Congress, who commenced his speech with—"Fellow-citizens, I have fought and bled for my country. I have helped to whip the British and the Indians. I have slept on the field of battle, with no covering but the canopy of heaven. I have walked over the frozen ground, till every footprint was marked with blood." Here he was brought up, by a voter inquiring, "Is that true, mister?" "Yes, sir," said the candidate. "Well, then," was the unexpected retort, "I guess I'll vote for the other fellow, for you've done enough for your country."

Butler's knight held no arguments so potent as golden ones—

What makes all doctrine plain and clear?
About two hundred pounds a year.
And that which was proved true before
Prove false again?—two hundred more.

Mr. Cobden, apparently, was of the same opinion, since he pronounced a Leaguer's, "I cannot make a speech, but I will give you a thousand pounds," the best speech he had ever heard. He would have admired Brigham Young's way of putting things to a party of new-comers to Utah: "Don't bother yourselves about your religious duties. You have been chosen for this work, and God will take care of your souls. Be of good cheer. Your first duty is to learn how to grow a cabbage, and along with the cabbage an onion, a tomato, a sweet potato; then how to feed a pig, to build a house, to plant a garden, to rear cattle, and to bake bread. In a word, your first duty is to live. The next duty—for those who cannot speak it now—is

to learn English, the language of God, the language of the Book of Mormon, the language of these latter days. These things you must do first, the rest will be delivered to you in proper season." No saint, however much married, could well be more practically minded; but, if eloquence, like beauty, is best unadorned, the palm must be awarded to Mete Kingi's speech in the New Zealand Parliament: "England is a great nation. The Maoris are a great people. The English have called us to this great house. We sit here. They have pounded my cow at Wanganui. I have spoken." Surely so many truths were never before set forth in as few words. Jemmy Thomson's tongue wagged to a livelier tune, publishing the merits and demerits of his haltered wife in Carlisle market-place. "Gentlemen," said this matrimonial auctioneer, "I have to offer to your notice my wife, Mary Ann Thomson, otherwise Williams, whom I mean to sell to the highest and fairest bidder. Gentlemen, it is her wish, as well as mine, to part for ever. She has been to me only a born serpent. I took her for my comfort, and the good of my home; but she became my torment, a domestic curse, a night invasion, and a daily devil. Gentlemen, I speak from my heart when I say, God deliver us from troublesome wives and frolicsome women! avoid them as you would a mad dog, a roaring lion, a loaded pistol, cholera morbus, Mount Etna, or any other pestilential thing in nature. Now, having shown you the dark side of my wife, and told you her faults and her failings, I will introduce the bright and sunny side of her, and explain her qualifications and goodness. She can read novels and milk cows; she can laugh and weep with the same ease that you could take a glass of ale when thirsty. Indeed, she reminds me of what the poet says of woman in general—

Heaven gave to woman the peculiar grace
To laugh, to weep, to cheat the human race.

She can make butter and scold the maid; she can sing Moore's melodies and pleat her frills and caps; she cannot make rum, gin, or whisky, but she is a good judge of their quality, from long experience in tasting them. I therefore offer her with all perfections and imperfections for the sum of thirty shillings." No one offered so much, and Mrs. Thomson was eventually knocked down for twenty shillings and a Newfoundland dog, and departed in high glee with her buyer.

The ill-mated farmer, outspoken as he was, roared gently as a sucking dove compared to the American gentleman who once orated in the following singular fashion: "The intellect of Ulysses S. Grant is like some of those ancient warehouses in the great cities of the older world, where floor rises above floor, and cellar descends below cellar—all packed full to overflowing with the richest merchandise. The intellect of the gentleman from Illinois is like some of those establishments we see in Pennsylvania Avenue, where the whole stock-in-trade of the merchant is spread out in the front window, and over it a label—'Anything in this window for one dollar.' If there be in our midst one low, sordid, vulgar soul; one mind, barren of mediocre intelligence; one heart, callous to every kindly sentiment, every generous emotion; one tongue, leprous with slander; one mouth, like unto a den of foul beasts, giving forth deadly odours; if there be here one character, which, while blotched and spotted, yet roars and rants and blackguards; if there be here one bold, bad, empty demagogue—it is the gentleman from Illinois!" To this delectable tirade the object of it replied that if he condescended to make a personal explanation to any member, it would not be to a member whose whole record was covered with venality, corruption, and crime; a member who had proved false alike to his friends, his country, his constituents, his politics, his religion, and his God. Then the first gentleman, however, stuck to his guns and brought the Thersitian passage at arms to an end with a fancy sketch of his opponent's behaviour when he should be removed to a better world, to heaven's gain and his country's loss: "I fancy the gentleman haranguing the assembled hosts of heaven—the cherubims and seraphims, the angels and archangels. How he would sail into them! How he would rout them, horse, foot, and dragoons! How he would attack their motives, and fling insinuations at their honesty! How he would declare for economy, and urge that the wheels of the universe must be stopped because they consumed too much grease!"

Australian orators, if not so imaginative as this, are quite as apt at vituperation; so apt, indeed, that it seems not to be deemed unparliamentary to stigmatise a government measure as a swindle, or call a member a brute and a "fossilated bigot." In a discussion in the New

South Wales House of Assembly respecting a pic-nic given by the ministers to their supporters—a pic-nic one who enjoyed it pronounced to be a “flummocker”—an opposition member accused the premier of practising a mean and despicable dodge; and when that gentleman repudiated the notion, declared the minister had “uttered the greatest lie he had uttered since he swore to one;” whereupon one of the minister’s friends relieved his feelings by informing the house that the Botany Bay aristocrats were the most ill-mannered dogs he had ever seen, and if one of them had dared to use such language to him, he would have wrung off the honourable member’s head then and there. Such rude, uncivil utterances smack strongly of the backwoods and the bush; but our American and colonial cousins are by no means singular in making abuse do duty for arguments. Frenchmen, nowadays, too often leave their politeness behind them upon entering the political arena; and if the decorum of debate is rarely outraged at Westminster, too many members of the British Parliament, when beyond the Speaker’s jurisdiction, betray a lamentable liking for mud-throwing, and indulge in language unbecoming a senator and gentleman.

Lord Dudley and Ward’s assertion that it took a long time for a moral position to find its way across the Atlantic, so tickled Tom Moore’s fancy that he pictured one being shipped for Barbadoes, when

The whole bench of bishops stood by in grave attitudes,

Packing the article tidy and neat;
As their reverences knew that in southerly latitudes
Moral positions don’t keep very sweet.

Metaphors, similes, and comparisons are dangerous things to dabble in. Orators who have not learned, like Biron, that rasset yeas and honest kersey noes will stand them in better stead than “figures pedantical,” are liable to deliver themselves of the sort of prose in which, according to a great authority, poetic souls delight. Dick Turner, the first man to dub himself a teetotaller, invoked his followers to action with “Comrades, let us be up and doing! Let us take our oars on our shoulders and plough the deep, till the good ship Temperance sails gaily over the land!” A worthy preacher besought his beloved brethren to remember they were sailing down the stream of time and must inevitably land in the ocean of eternity. “It seems,” said a politician, “that some

solid ground should be laid in these known and familiar questions before we put to sea.” “Here,” said an excited Home-ruler, “here I intended to close, but a new thought comes rushing like a mighty comet through the heaven of mind, scattering systems in its path!” Surely he must have been one of those Irish members, with whom an Attorney-General for Ireland said he could not agree, because they “were constantly standing in the front, shouting out in indifferent Latin, Excelsior!” The legal luminary in question was given to saying odd things. Arguing against conferring the suffrage upon women, he said he was well aware that many a judge had been an old woman, but that was no reason why every old woman ought to be a judge; and expressed his belief that if Queen Anne could only be present at the debate, with all the knowledge she had acquired in the meantime, she would vote against the bill.

In speaking, as in racing, a good start is desirable. A capital one was once effected by a newly-elected French deputy. Stepping into the tribune with the air of a man charged with a momentous mission, he commenced: “It is necessary that I should speak to my country—” Startled into silence by such a solemn exordium, the assembly waited anxiously while the orator paused for a moment, ere he proceeded: “It is necessary that I should speak to my country—of cheese!” Of course he got no farther, and what he wanted to say about cheese remains a mystery. Almost as much merriment was created in the House of Commons by an Irish member observing, “If the honourable gentleman chooses to challenge me, we can retire—” But as soon as the hubbub created had subsided, he put himself right by saying: “I mean, that if the honourable gentleman challenges my accuracy, we can retire—to the library, and I will show him that he is wrong.” Just as awkward in expressing what was in his mind was the modern builder, who avowed himself better fitted for the scaffold than for public speaking; and the north-country mayor, who promised always to discharge his duties with partiality and impartiality—a fact, perhaps, within the capacity of the speaker at a temperance conference, who described himself as a teetotaller and a non-teetotaller, an occasional drinker and an habitual abstainer.

An advocate, anxious to prove killing no murder, argued: “It is idle to say these

men came together for the purpose of destroying life when only one life was lost." If this was not a bull, it was akin to one, like somebody's announcement of his intention of carrying over the Atlantic "the fiery cross, streaming with goodwill from the old world to the new." More comical still was the slip of the gentleman who averred that he could not keep silence without saying a few words, and that of the M.P. who boldly challenged the government to name a single attempt at shooting in Ireland, that was not carried out for want of a gun. Irishmen certainly have a special faculty for confusing things. When an English member quoted an Irish newspaper's complaint that persons, whom every human being believed to be guilty of the foulest murders, walked out of the dock, free, an indignant defender of Erin declared the writer must have referred to the English county of Devonshire, where a grand jury found a man guilty, and insisted upon his being sentenced without further bother. "Ladies and gentlemen," said an Irish manager to his audience of three, "as there is nobody here I'll dismiss you all; the performance of this night will not be performed, but will be repeated to-morrow evening." Possibly this is an invention, but it is not two years since Mr. Speaker heard himself addressed thus: "Sir, seeing the effects of sorrow, upon my life I thought it was to-morrow. Really, sir, I don't know whether it is to-morrow or yesterday, but I want to know at what time the House will meet?" Apropos of a proposition to close Irish public-houses altogether on Sunday, the same gentleman exclaimed, "Let the heavens fall, but let not an atom of injustice be done to Ireland." And we might dig long in the "mummy-pits of Hansard" ere we exhumed a richer specimen of Hibernian oratory than the gallant major's speech against the appointment of a commission for inquiring into conventual institutions. "Let the House suppose," said he, "that a royal commissioner was appointed to visit them. He was furnished with a royal commission, and thundered at the door of a convent. He was admitted, and he asked the lady who admitted him who she might have been, and what was her quality before she entered the convent? She replied, 'I will tell you. My sire, sir, was a king; my mother was the daughter of the Sixth James of Scotland, and afterwards the First James of England.

Her mother, sir, was Queen-Regent of Scotland and Queen-Consort of France, and next entitled to the throne of England; she was murdered by a Protestant queen;—could any honourable member of the House deny it?" But this poor nun went on to say: "Sir, I had a brother, his name was Rupert, sir; he rode by the side of Charles the First, until a Protestant—not a Catholic; but a Protestant Roundhead of England murdered that monarch!" Let honourable members deny it if they could! "Sir, I had a sister, her name was Sophia; she was mother to the King of England, sir. Proceed with your duty as a royal commissioner. My name is Elizabeth, I am the abbess—the poor abbess of Ardwick!" It was very easy to go upon the stage, but difficult to leave it with dignity. With what dignity could that royal commissioner depart from the room in the eyesight of the injured princess—and a loyal princess, no doubt? He could not leave it except in one of two characters: either as a miserable slave, or as a gentleman. If in the former character, he was not fit to be a royal commissioner; if in the latter, the royal commission was not fit for him. What was there for him to do? Nothing but to rush from the presence of that poor, insulted princess, and cover his wretched head with shame, put himself on his knees in front of the only gods he recognised, namely, the immortal gods, and to pray that they would grant him pardon:

*Dii, quibus imperium est animarum, Umbraque
silentes,
Et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia late,
Sit mihi fas audita loqui.*

He would add, 'Da mihi veniam,' and it was to be hoped that he would get pardon, for he would stand in need of it."

This is certainly as odd a bit of oratory as one could reasonably expect to find.

THE SEVEN-NIGHTS' WATCH.

NORTH-COUNTRY SUPERSTITION.

NAY, don't turn the key, not yet, not yet, five nights haven't past and gone
Since we laid the green sods straight and meet, to wait for the cold gray stone;
See, his pipe still lies on the mantel where the old arm-chair is set,
The knife is left in the half-carved stick—don't turn the door-key yet!

How it rains! it must be dree an' all where the wet wind sweeps the brow,
And it's dry and warm by the hearth-stone; don't steek the lintel now!

Fling a fir-log on the ingle; he was used to love the light,
That shone "haste thee" through the darkness,
when he was abroad at night.

Thieves? nay, they scarce come up our way, and
there's none so much to steal,
Just the bread loaf in the cupboard, and the hank on
the spinning-wheel;
And I'd rather lose the all I have, aye, the burial-fee
on the shelf,
Than think of him barred out from home, out in the
cold by himself.

Whisht! was not yon a footstep in the path out there
by the byre?

Whisht! I know how boards can creak. I say, pile
sticks on the fire.

The wind sighs over the upland, just like a parting
soul;

Get to bed with you all—I'll stay, and keep my watch
by the gathering coal.

For all he grew so wild and strange, my one son
loved his mother.

Mayhap he'd come to me when scarce he'd show
himself to another.

When the drink was out he was always kind, and
e'en when he had a drop

He was mild to me. Don't turn the key! For seven
nights here I stop.

I bore him, kept him, and loved him; whatever else
might come,

He knew, while his mother held the door, was
always his welcome home.

You may stare and laugh, an' it please you; but, oh,
a glint of him

Were just a sparkle of heaven to the eyes that are
waxing dim!

And I know, should he meet his father, up there in
the rest and joy,

He'll say, "A couple of nights are left, thou'st need
to cheer her, my boy."

So, leave the key, and fetch the logs, till the mourner's
week is done;

I tell thee I'll watch, lest I miss in sleep a last smile
from my son.

ARE WE READY?

FOR some months past but one question has seemed to trouble the political mind of Europe. Each power appears bent upon making one thing certain; and every newspaper we take up contains some reference as to whether this or that nation is ready for war. In England, too—although, as usual, at the eleventh hour—we are beginning to count our means, and to inquire whether we are ready to take our place in the ranks, should the clouds, which at present threaten us, prove the precursors of a storm.

When making up their accounts, most men are but too apt to run into one or other extreme. They are either too sanguine, and make too much of their assets, or they are too desponding, and look upon the sum total of their money as far from enough to meet their liabilities. In England our fault, at any rate of late years, has been of the latter kind.

With one or two praiseworthy exceptions, the daily and weekly press have become pessimists of the most extreme school. Every now and then we are treated to leading articles which make us wonder whether, beyond the three or four sentries in Pall Mall and at St. James's Palace, there are any soldiers whatever to be found in England. That faults exist in our army, and that there are many reforms required in the details of the service, are truths which cannot be contradicted. But do they not exist elsewhere? Are the French, the Austrian, the Italian, or even the German armies, free from faults?

In numbers we are certainly deficient, but not by any means as much so as many of our military groaners would make out. Those who expect that England ever will, or ever can, maintain an immense standing army like that of Germany, look forward to a simple impossibility. We have all, more or less, our work to do and our living to get; we cannot afford—not even for three or four years' training—to let several hundred thousands of men stand idle in times of peace. But for all that we have an army which is much more efficient than many of us give it credit for being. As for being ready—when were we ever ready in the Continental sense of the word? Were we so when the great Napoleon returned from Elba, and we had to fight him and his legions at Waterloo? Were we ready, when, in 1854, we "drifted" into the Crimean War; or when, three years later, the great Indian Mutiny broke out? And yet, if history is to be trusted, we have always held our own, and something more besides, even under the most adverse circumstances at the outset. What can be done once may be done again. But still it is as well to count our means carefully, and to see whether the question, Are we ready?—ready for what there is any chance of our having to do—can be answered honestly in the affirmative.

The sight which all London went to gaze at, on Saturday, the 1st of the present month, was certainly one of which Englishmen might be proud, for it could not have been witnessed in any other country in the world. When thirty-two or thirty-three thousand peaceable citizens leave their occupations, assemble in one spot, and go through their duty with a steadiness that would do honour to the best regular regiments, the nation to which they belong may with truth write itself down as a people of soldiers. But this is not all.

The thirty odd thousand volunteers who paraded the other day in Hyde-park were, every one of them, trained men; and a large proportion were good—many of them excellent—shots. Moreover, they represented less than a sixth of the whole volunteer force of England; for the official returns tell us that not less than two hundred thousand efficient trained men are now enrolled in the various volunteer corps in the kingdom, and could, at a day's notice, be called under arms. Nor should it be forgotten that the reserve, so to speak, of the volunteers—the men, that is to say, who have served a certain time and have retired, but who would be quite ready to come forward again if they were wanted—represents in itself a large and important force. In other countries no man would ever dream of going through the drill and worry of soldiering unless he were forced to do it. In France, Germany, or Austria, a citizen takes up a musket and puts on a uniform, but he does so because he is obliged to obey the laws. He hates the whole affair as much as we hate paying our rates and taxes. He is, in every sense of the word, a pressed man; and there is an old English proverb respecting volunteers and pressed men which ought not to be forgotten. As to the drill and bearing of the volunteers, they have set that controversy at rest for ever. We have all seen, in Continental towns, scores of regular soldiers, and dozens of regular battalions, who were not one-half as business-like or workman-like as the least well-drilled of the corps, that marched past the Prince of Wales on the 1st of this month. The difficulty Englishmen, who escorted foreigners to the review on that day experienced, was to make their friends from across the Channel believe that the troops on parade were not regular soldiers, who were being shown under a false name. When they fully understood how matters really were, they believed us Englishmen to be more incomprehensible than ever; but began, also, to have a faint idea of what a self-governed people really are.

So much, then, for the defensive force of England. Even at the Hyde-park review several of the good qualities of the volunteer force could not be shown. In field—and more particularly in garrison—artillery, our citizen soldiers, by all accounts, more than hold their own. They are excellent shots; and being all more or less intelligent, educated men, they are

very quickly taught the theory as well as the practice of gunnery. Nor is our defensive army wanting in engineers, as the monthly Army List will show. In nearly every county there are some scores of men trained to the work of sappers, and well up to their work. But the best quality which the volunteer corps has yet shown, is the determined courage with which they have persevered in their work for the last sixteen years. And this measure of praise is due to them one and all, from the men of title—like the Duke of Westminster, Earl Cowper, Lord Ranelagh, Lord Elcho, and others too numerous to mention—down to the humblest mechanic who shoulders a rifle in the ranks. They have all shown a determination to overcome difficulties which is beyond praise. Nor have some of the obstacles they have surmounted been small or insignificant. Whatever the War Office and the Horse Guards may do or say now, it is a simple fact that for many years the military authorities not only sneered openly at the volunteer force, but threw every possible obstacle in the way of their advancing in their training. Public opinion, which is seldom very wrong, and generally manages in the long run to assert its own views, has in this instance, as in many others, been too strong for military red-tapeism. The volunteer force has taken root amongst us. There is, however, one matter connected with it which the press and the public of this country ought to insist upon. Our volunteers, although they can count in their ranks some of the best shots in the world, are not armed as they ought to be. They still carry the now almost useless old Snider rifle. If they were ever called into action in the defence of the country, the inferiority of their arms would place them at an immense disadvantage. There could not be a worse or a more false economy than not to give these men the very best arms that could be procured. Of course difficulties will be made about this reform. There never yet was a measure of common sense which was not condemned by men whose intellects are behind the age. There are, no doubt, scores of worthy veterans who look back with regret upon the day when there were no such men as volunteers in the land; and would rejoice to-morrow, if, by a general order, the whole force could be abolished. But, the fates be praised, these are not the men who rule over us;

nor have they much control—although they, unfortunately, have still some—over our army. With time, much can be done. It may be hoped that the next few years will see a very great change for the better in the way the authorities treat the volunteer force of Great Britain; for, if ever this country is invaded by a foreign foe, it will be chiefly to the volunteers that we shall have to look for our defenders.

As regards our militia, the ideas of most Englishmen are sufficiently hazy. They see every year, perhaps, a dozen or two young militiamen who have only just been rescued from their normal state of roughs, and who, in passing every day to and from the place of drill—if the regiment is on billet during its training—indulge in horseplay which is far from pleasing to other persons walking on the pavement. This, however, is perhaps the very worst feature of the militia. The privates have in them quite as good material on which to work as the regular army, but they do not, as a rule, enjoy the same advantages of discipline, nor of being always under the eye of non-commissioned officers. One month in twelve is too short a time for men to acquire military habits and regularity. Still, when under arms, and in all the duties pertaining to their actual training, they are exceedingly good soldiers. During the Crimean War three or four militia corps were ordered, or volunteered, to go abroad, and did garrison duty at Corfu and Malta for several months. Others were called out for permanent duty at Portsmouth, and one or two English and Irish garrisons; and, when their time was up and they went back to their homes, the military authorities complimented them very highly upon their general conduct, which was everything that soldiers' conduct ought to be. The esprit de corps among the officers in our militia regiments is excellent, and whatever may be wanting in the discipline of the men would certainly be forthcoming if they were wanted for permanent service, or after they had been a short time together in camp or barracks. Nay, even as it is, complaints against the different militia regiments during their annual training, are so few and far between as to be rarely, if ever, heard of. This force comprises twenty regiments of artillery, and about a hundred and twenty-five of infantry. Putting these down at the very moderate figure of two hundred men for each corps of artillery, and six hundred

for every regiment of infantry, we shall find that we have close upon ninety thousand militiamen who could be called out by the War Office at a week's notice. Let us say that one half of the militia, or even forty thousand of them, were called out permanently, we should be able to muster for war purposes, an army of not less than sixty thousand regulars of all arms, which could be sent wherever the seat of war might be. It is true that, looked at by the numbers which constitute modern armies, these would be regarded as a small contingent in these days. But there are armies and armies in the world; and, without intending for a moment to increase our national vanity, it is not too much to say that a well-appointed British force of sixty thousand men would be equal, in the work it could do, to one hundred thousand of any other European army. There is this difference between English and other troops—that not only do the latter, as Soult used to say of them, never know when they are beaten, but they never know what disobedience means, and rally round their officers after a disaster, if possible, more than they do after victory. French soldiers are the exact contrary to this. So long as they are conquerors, all is well. But the moment they experience even a slight defeat, they begin by discussing the acts of their superiors, and end by becoming a mere rabble. Those who saw the real fighting during the Franco-Prussian War, can testify that, after the first victories of the Germans, at Wissembourg and Wörth, there was no longer any real discipline in the ranks of the French troops; and that their defeat at Sedan was owing far more to the fact of the army having for weeks before been a mere mob, than to any superior tactics or pluck on the part of their enemy. The German army has certainly made a great name for itself, but in the war, where it was so uniformly victorious, it was rarely, if ever, pitted against a foe that was not already half beaten, and more than twice outnumbered. The German soldier is very different to his French enemy. He errs one way quite as much as the former errs the other. The Frenchman has no idea of obedience. The German is a mere living machine, and cannot move save as one of the wheels in a human clock. If left alone, without a commander, he must be beaten, for he has never been allowed to act or think for himself, even in the most trivial matters.

The higher ranks, even perhaps all the commissioned officers, in the German army, delight and glory in their calling; but it is not so with the men in the ranks. As a rule they hate soldiering. They are all what we may call "pressed men," for voluntary enlistment does not exist amongst them. It would be a long time before a hundred thousand German volunteers would take the trouble of putting on uniform and learning their drill as soldiers. Napoleon used to call us a nation of shopkeepers; but unless what we hear and see passing around us, both in England and other countries, are dreams, and have no foundation in fact, we ought, far more than any other people in the world, to be called a nation of soldiers. In other lands, men take up arms when they are forced to do so. Even when France was in her agony, and a foreign army overran half her country, the men who volunteered to serve against the Germans were not more than a few hundreds, and even those would only join the corps of *Frances-Tireurs*, in which there was little or no discipline, and where every man did very much as he liked. Those who have any doubt as to what Englishmen can do when in difficulties, ought to read Sir John Kaye's account of the Sepoy War. Never before or since in the history of the world, has such a mere handful of men been pitted against such overwhelming numbers, and never has an army had to contend with an enemy so ready to annoy them in every possible manner. No Englishman's life was safe if he wandered from his own camp or barrack. In very many instances, more particularly at the commencement of the struggle, women and children were dependent upon the troops for their very lives, and hampered enormously the already most difficult movements of our forces. Those who are old enough to remember that terrible summer of 1857, and the first four or five months of 1858, must recollect how, not only throughout the continent of Europe, but also in America—nay, in England itself—our cause was deemed hopeless, and our dominion in the East believed to be at an end for ever. But we pulled through everything, and in the end came forth victorious, having a firmer grasp than ever upon the hundred million souls who are under our rule in India. So far as the history of past wars in every part of the globe can instruct us, no other people, or no other troops in the world, could have done what we achieved

in those days. And, as a simple matter of fact, have we not—no matter what faults still exist in our military system, or what reforms still remain to be effected—improved greatly, in every sense of the word, as to all that pertains to our army, since 1857? For one general or other superior officer who had seen active service twenty years ago, there are now a hundred. When our troops went to the Crimea in 1854, a medal, save on the breast of some officer who had been through a campaign in India, was as rare as a black swan. Now distinctions of this sort are so common that they hardly excite observation. Our cavalry as well as our infantry have adopted better kinds of drill; and our artillery is not behind in every possible improvement. We had then no commissariat to speak of; no system of field telegraphy; no intelligence department. Our volunteer force did not even exist; our militia was weak in numbers, indifferently officered; and, save in rare instances, quite unfit for service, either at home or abroad. The best of our regular troops had no practical experience of camp life, and were as helpless when ordered into tents, as—to use a popular simile of those times—"a swan on a turnpike road." We may not yet be perfect—what army is?—but we are a thousand per cent. in better order for taking the field than we were in the times we speak of.

Take, as an instance of this, the greatly improved troopships, by which, between October and April, men required to reinforce our regiments in India are taken to that country, and the invalids and time-expired men brought home. In these magnificent vessels—five in number, and each of more than four thousand tons—nearly twenty thousand men could be embarked for any part of the world in a few hours.* Their ordinary speed under steam is eight knots an hour, but, if required, they could do ten or eleven. And to these ships could be added, if wanted, in less than a week, as many more from the steam reserve as would take double the number of men. Twenty years ago it required at least a fortnight's notice and preparation before a

* These are—the Crocodile, four thousand and forty-four tons; the Euphrates, five thousand and four; the Jumna, four thousand eight hundred and forty-four; the Malabar, four thousand eight hundred and ninety-three; and the Serapis, four thousand one hundred and seventy-three.

single regiment could be embarked for foreign service.

There can be no greater mistake, either in public or in private matters, than that of over-rating our resources and means. But in military matters we underestimate our strength. We seem never able sufficiently to decry our armies, the men who compose them, and all who have anything to do with upholding the honour of the country. Nothing that the authorities can do seems to satisfy those who are as ready to find fault with all that is English, as they are ready to praise all that is foreign. It is true that to grumble is one of our national pastimes, and that if our armies were more perfect than any that had ever been seen in the world, Englishmen would still be found to decry all that wore our uniform. But with a little rational reasoning, the clouds which are supposed to hover over us are very easily dispersed. As a rule, men—that is to say, Englishmen—will not, or cannot, see what there is good in our land forces; but they can, and will, dwell at any length upon our shortcomings. Whatever clean linen we have they carefully hide; but our dirty clothes they not only invariably wash in public, but call the whole world to witness the operation.

As we said before, other armies in Europe have certainly advanced greatly during the last twenty years in everything that can add to their efficiency. But it is a great mistake to imagine, as many appear to do, that we have stood still.

From time to time stereotyped complaints, respecting the quantity and quality of our recruits, appear in the public prints. That they have a colouring of truth is certain; but they do not always state the whole case as it really exists. The chief reason why so comparatively few men enlist in times of peace is, that, even amongst the humblest classes, men can make a better use of their time, and earn more money, otherwise than by soldiering. But let a war come—let it really be a question as to whether we are to hold our own or not—and the difference will at once be seen. Government, it is true, may have to increase the bounty, but the number of men who come forward to take it will be multiplied tenfold. Our militia, too, could, with a little judicious increase of pay, be raised to nearly double its present strength. It will, no doubt, be a most deplorable thing if we have to go

to war; but of our fitness to do so, and of our ability to hold our own, there can hardly be two opinions. With sixty thousand or seventy thousand regulars in the front ranks; with ninety thousand militia as a reserve in the rear; and with one hundred and fifty thousand volunteers for defence of our shores, it seems barely possible that, if there is to be a struggle, we should not come out of it with the usual results. And one thing is very certain, that we shall never, so long as war is not proclaimed, be much more prepared than we are now. Englishmen have their own peculiar way of doing things, and one of them is never fully to prepare beforehand for the future. It is impossible to change what may be called our national nature. But, if the evil work be forced upon us, there can be little doubt but that, in a very short time indeed, we should find ourselves much more ready than we ever were before on a similar occasion.

A POPULAR FESTIVAL IN GERMANY.

THERE is, perhaps, no festival throughout Germany, which is so universal and so popular as that of the "Kirmess," or "Kirchweih." It corresponds to our village wakes, or what has become in recent times the Church Dedication Festival, only that in Germany it has always been a far more important day than with us. There is even a special Gospel and Epistle appointed for the Kirchweih day.

The name "Kirmess," abbreviated from Kirchmesse—Church Mass, or "Kirwe," as it is called in South Germany, from "Kirchweih"—Church Consecration, denotes an ecclesiastical source. In the old Saxon land of Westphalia, the Kirmess customs plainly manifest this origin. Indeed, the common explanation of the Kirmess is that it is the anniversary of the Dedication of the Church, while some go farther, and say that it is a celebration of the victory of Christianity over Heathenism. But although no writer has hitherto taken the trouble of tracing its precise commencement, it is evident that the origin of the Festival may be sought in Pagan times. Allusions to it may be found in the ancient laws—for instance, in the "constitutio" of the Frank King Dagobert; "de mercatu ad fanem habendo," in the Charta Childeberti regis Franc, in Cesarius von Heisterbach, and others.

The "court days," on which in olden times all the inhabitants of the whole district assembled and wandered from one sacred grove to another, were combined with sacrifices, fairs, feasting, and games. After the introduction of Christianity, these festivals were suffered to remain with the substitution of Christian applications, for it was only possible by slow degrees to remove the palpable proofs of heathenism. The courts of justice, feasts, and markets, migrated from the groves to the churchyards, with the full sanction and approval of Pope Gregory the Great. The Venerable Bede quotes a letter of Gregory's to the Anglo-Saxon bishops, in which he says:

"As they" (the recently converted Anglo-Saxons) "are accustomed to slaughter many oxen and horses on the festivals of devils" (the ancient deities), "it is necessary to allow these festivals to exist, but to substitute some other object. Therefore, on the anniversaries of the Consecration of the Church, and on the commemoration days of the martyrs, whose relics are preserved in those churches which have been erected on the sites of the former sacrificial groves, a similar festival shall be held. The spot shall be marked out with green boughs, and a Christian entertainment shall be given. Animals shall no longer be sacrificed in honour of Satan, but to the glory of God, and the satisfying of men's appetites, in order that due thanks may be rendered to the Giver of all Good."

As years went on these banquets were held, not only on the green before the church and in the churchyards, but even in the churches themselves. Many priests protested against this sacrilegious custom, and laws were framed to forbid it. But the prohibition was disregarded until the fourteenth century, when the terrible pestilence, the Black Death, raged throughout the land during the summer of 1348.

We learn from Cesarius von Heisterbach, that formerly the secular priests took part in the public feasts, to the great scandal of their brethren in the monasteries, who especially denounced their practice of playing the music for the dances. At Erfurt, in Thüringen, the hand of a priest was struck by lightning whilst he was performing on the violin; and this event afforded an opportunely instructive moral.

By the fifteenth century, the Kirchweih had greatly degenerated, and such excesses and brawls, often ending in murder, took

place, that the authorities had recourse to stringent measures of restriction. The most successful of these was the separation of the Church festival from the secular Kirmess feast, and the transfer of the latter to the winter. People generally, however, contrived to combine the Kirmess with the ancient harvest festival, and it is still chiefly celebrated in the months of September and October. Some old parishes celebrated as many as four, or even nine, Kirmessen in the course of the year. At length government ordained that each parish should content itself with one Kirmess annually, which was not to last more than two days. In some places the participators were strictly confined to the parishioners. Strangers were punished by fines and scourging.

The Elector, Karl Theodor, of the Palatinate, who afterwards became Elector of Bavaria, commanded, in 1764, that every Kirmess should be held on the same day; and three years later he forbade all processions and plays; but neither decree was obeyed. The French, in 1807, were equally adverse to the custom, and all the masks, &c., used for the processions were confiscated and burnt in the Grand Dukedom of Berg. However, after the Germans had cast off the yoke of their French oppressors, ancient customs revived and flourished in new glory; and amongst these was the Kirmess.

In the earliest times only beer and wine were drunk at the public festivals; but shortly before the Thirty Years' War, brandy, which had till then only been known as medicine, came into use. About a hundred years ago, cider and sloe-berry wine, sweetened with honey, was the Kirmess drink. Now the favourite beverage is aniseed brandy, with sugar, on the Lower Rhine, and beer in South Germany.

The most curious part of the festival is the interring and disintering the Kirmess.

Our forefathers were wont to represent everything figuratively. The Kirmess mirth was disinterred at the same place where it had been buried with grief and mourning the previous year. The evening before the feast, the village youths march forth, accompanied by strains of music, to the appointed spot, where some of the lads gravely proceed to dig until they find the Kirmess. Finally a horse's skull is drawn out of the hole, placed on a pole decked with flowers and ribbons, and then borne in procession to the village amid music

and loud rejoicing. In many places on the Lower Rhine, the horse's head has lately been exchanged for a figure of Zacchæus, the patron saint of the Kirmess. Having thus gained full possession of the Kirmess merriment, the joyous troop wends its way to the inn, where the disinterred Kirmess symbol is erected above the dancing-room, together with the Kirmess crown, consisting of flowers and eggs.

The young men then solemnly bind themselves to make holiday for three or more days, to keep a joint score, and to celebrate the feast jointly, as well as to stand by each other in the event of possible fighting. This compact is ratified by each youth in turn striking a post, fixed in the ground for the purpose, with a heavy wooden cudgel. The number of strokes denote the amount of holidays each will take. Generally three are deemed sufficient, but sometimes four or six strokes are given. It is considered a good omen when the stake is finally driven quite into the ground. The girls, whose business it is to manufacture the Kirmess crown, and in some places to deck the Kirmess tree, are present during the process just described, and they fasten a red ribbon on the breast of every youth, which may not be discarded until the prescribed Kirmess days are over.

The Kirmess is generally celebrated on Sunday, and as the last chords of the organ die away, the dance music strikes up; the girls are fetched from the church-path by their partners, and those maidens take precedence who have manufactured the Kirmess crown.

Some fifty years back, the dancing still took place under the shadow of the village linden tree. On the second and third holidays, the "Gelagsburschen" go to church, headed by a band, playing. Formerly they proceeded thither in masquerading guise, and were fetched by the priest himself. The musicians performed during the mass bespoken by the "Burschen," but the tunes were not always of an edifying description. After service, the party either betook themselves to the dancing-room, or else visited distant farms, where the young men were regaled with cakes baked for the occasion. By Wednesday it was the turn of the married men to take the lead, and the youths retired. Frequently the wildest revelry occurred under the new auspices, and extended over the whole week, so that the

Kirmess was not buried until Saturday. The horse's head again played the chief part in this ceremony. Either that, or else the effigy of Zacchæus on his horse was carried on a bier through the village with the usual funeral melodies. Zacchæus on his white horse is evidently Woden himself, but there is no explanation how Zacchæus became the patron saint of the Kirmess. The "Gelagsburschen" walked beside the bier with chalked faces, and covered with white cloths. There were also the usual masks, reminiscences of the ancient heathen gods—such as the Faithful Eckhart, Hakelberend the Wild Huntsman, Knecht Ruprecht and Frau Berchta—although they were now made to assume a merely demoniacal aspect. Thus they proceeded to the spot, whence the Kirmess was to be resuscitated the following year. The place chosen was generally secluded and dismal, and the flickering torches lent it a still more uncanny appearance. The horse's head or the figure was then laid in the deeply-dug grave, and the bones and skulls of animals were also cast in. Whilst the hole was being filled up, a hideous din was created by those present—howling, shrieking, and beating pots and pans. With wild shouts the company returned to the village; and on this wise was the Kirmess buried.

The ceremony varies slightly in different parts of Germany, although its main features remain the same.

In Swabia, after the young people have danced from Monday morning till Wednesday evening, the "Kirwe" having commenced on Sunday, each youth takes his partner, and they all walk two and two to bury the "Kirchweih" outside the village. Here the "Kirwe" consists of a piece of cake, some old rags and coloured ribbons, and a bottle of wine, which is poured into the grave. The other articles are then thrown in, and all the spectators break out into loud lamentations, such as we have just described. At Lahr, in Baden, a sealed bottle of wine represents the Kirchweih, and it is formally interred in the middle of the village.

The innkeepers of Wildberg, in Swabia, are forced to provide all the cake, gratis, which their guests consume in the course of the evening. In several villages there are special games connected with the Kirchweih, such as the so-called "hat dance," which is performed as follows, on the Sunday succeeding the Kirchweih. A

hat is drawn up to the top of a long pole, by means of a cord fastened at the bottom, and to which a long piece of lighted tinder is affixed. The youths then dance round the hat in turn to an appointed goal, where each dancer delivers up the decorated sprig he bears in his hand to his successor, who is chosen by lot. He who happens to be dancing when the hat falls from the burnt cord, wins the hat.

But it is not every Swabian village that can boast of a Kirchweih. Some parishes are said to have forfeited their privilege, and among these are Betzingen—where a beggar is believed to have starved on the Kirchweih day—Tübingen, Bietigheim, and Weilheim. It is told of Tübingen and Bietigheim, that they lost their rights because, once, two women quarrelled while baking their Kirchweih cakes, and killed one another with the plates.

A somewhat similar incident is recorded of the natives of Weilheim. One Kirchweih, two beggars approached the village. They agreed with one another to ask only for cake on such a festival day, and one was to go to Weilheim, while the other betook himself to the Derendingen Kirchweih; at night they were to meet and divide the proceeds. The Derendingers gave plentifully, but the Weilheimers behaved so stingily that the two beggars fought over the division of the spoil, and one was killed. This happened close to Weilheim, on the road to Derendingen, where a lime tree now stands. On account of this sad catastrophe, the Weilheimers resolved never to hold another Kirchweih. To this day they do not like to be reminded of the occurrence, but if twitted with the loss of the Kirchweih cake, they proudly return that they eat cake all the week through.

The inhabitants of Hepisan are nicknamed "cuckoos," because they are accused of having sold their Kirchweih for a cuckoo, in olden times. At Wurmlingen, and one or two other places in Swabia, the people themselves declare that the Kirchweih is in reality an ancient heathen festival.

In that part of Bavaria called the Lechrain, it is customary, on the Monday morning after the Kirchweih, to have a solemn mass said for the souls of all the deceased members of the parish, at which the women appear dressed in black. On the same day the musicians go round to the house of every well-to-do peasant, and

play a dance, in return for which they expect to be regaled with meat, cakes, and beer. This process has to be rapidly performed at an early hour, for no one likes to miss the souls' mass, to which the peasantry cling with the greatest devotion.

We will conclude with a curious legend respecting the Kirchweih of Bruckdorf, in the Bavarian Palatinate. It so happened that Pope Leo the Ninth chanced to be travelling from Hungary to Nürnberg, just as the Counts of Schwarzburg had completed the erection of the church at Bruckdorf. They therefore besought the holy father on bended knees to consecrate it. But the Pope was unable to deviate from his route, although he did not like to refuse such a request. Accordingly he rode to the summit of a hill, whence the little church was visible, and made the sign of the cross over it as it lay in the distance. This did not quite satisfy the knights of Schwarzburg, and the holy father, noticing their discontent, said to them: "Go ye thither and convince yourselves. If the walls bear no sign of the consecration, I will grant your desire."

—And, behold! the knights found that an angel had acted as the Pope's substitute, and that the church was duly consecrated!

The fame of this miracle soon spread abroad, and crowds of pious pilgrims flocked to Bruckdorf. It is said that amongst the portraits of the Popes in the Basilica of St. Peter at Rome, Leo the Ninth may be seen portrayed with the Bruckdorf church as his attribute.

GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY,
AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," &c. &c.

BOOK VI. GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE.
CHAPTER IV. UNEXPECTED HELP.

LADY OLIVE DESPARD had given Audrey a hint, in the note she wrote to her at Ida's request, that it would be well to let her cousin's looks and movements pass without comment for the present; and Audrey obeyed the intimation. Not that she was not curious to find out what was the matter with Ida, and what was the object of her sudden and unannounced visit to Lady Olive; but that she was of a happy nature, not given either to mysteriousness or to jealousy on her own account;

and, as she felt no doubt but that she should know all about it in time, whatever it might be, she did not mind Lady Olive's being in Ida's confidence in the first instance. Audrey was quite sure that Ida was not in love with anyone, and in her present state of mind she really could not feel much distress about "trouble" on any other score. Ida, therefore, remained in her room on the following morning unquestioned, and Audrey left her to herself until nearly noon, when she took her some hothouse flowers which Madeleine Kindersley had just brought from Beech Lawn.

To her surprise, Audrey found that Ida was not alone. Her cousin was sitting at her writing-table, and looking tired, as if she had been writing for some time; but she had laid aside her pen, and had evidently been listening or speaking—and with some agitation—to the second person in the room, towards whom Audrey glanced, when her first look at Ida showed her the disturbance in her face. This second person was a handsome young woman, whose colourless cheeks and determined expression—she did not remove her eyes from Ida's face—and the firm resting of her hand upon a parcel on the table, made it evident that no commonplace subject was in discussion between them.

"I beg your pardon," said Audrey; "I did not know—I only came to bring you these. Madeleine is here."

"Thank you, dear," said Ida, taking the flowers. "I am so sorry I can't go down to see Madeleine; at least, not yet. Is she going to stay long?"

"Until after lunch."

"That's right. This is Bessy West, whom you have heard of."

Bessy West bowed.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Audrey, coming up to her, and shaking hands with her, full of enthusiasm about another survivor of the catastrophe of the Albatross, and instantly accounting for Ida's agitation by the necessarily painful associations evoked by the sight of her companion in that disaster. "When did you come, and where did you come from?"

"I have just come from Ireland," replied Bessy West.

"Did not Griffith tell you?" asked Ida. "He met her last evening in the town, and told us at Despard Court. Is it not odd, Audrey, how things turn out? Here is Bessy West come to Wrottesley, with your old friend Mrs. Simcox."

"Well, that is funny. And lucky too, for you can give her her things, you know—oh, I see you have given them to her."

Audrey had seen the parcel on the table, and recognised it for that which they had found in the packing-case.

"Mrs. Simcox was here yesterday, Ida, while you were out. She is looking so well. Do you like Ireland?" said Audrey, addressing Bessy West, who answered:

"Yes, ma'am."

Then Audrey ran downstairs again, and she and Madeleine agreed that it was a pity Bessy West had turned up just now, when Ida was not in good spirits, and when the renewal of the scenes she had gone through was undesirable.

Meantime, Ida and her former attendant resumed the conversation which Audrey had interrupted.

"And do you really mean to say that you would not have asked to see me, that I might never have known you were here, if you had not heard that rumour at Mrs. Lipscott's?"

"I do mean to say it, Miss Pemberton. Why should I have asked to see you? For your sake, or for mine? There never was any love lost between us, you know, and I don't pretend to be what I'm not."

Ida's eyes filled with tears.

"I don't think I deserved love or anything like it from you," she said. "Pray forgive me. I had been so accustomed to be loved, and to have so much that I did not deserve, that I did not think about meriting anything. Why, all the time you and I were together, I never thought about what your life might have been, or whether you had any sorrows or difficulties."

"Just so, Miss Pemberton; and yet, I am a woman like yourself, and not so very much older, though I have lived a great deal longer than my years. But if you did not think or care about my life, or what was to become of it, there was one that did, and while my life lasts, I shall never forget her. It is because I shall never forget her I am here to-day, and am going to do you the greatest service that ever was done you in your life."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I think you do, Miss Pemberton; though it's contradicting you very flat to say so. But I must go back to the beginning to make it clear to you. When I first came to your house at Randwick, I had my suspicions that there was something wrong with you. I cannot put it

in fine words, you know, but if you will just believe once for all that I mean no offence in anything I say, and only intend to do you good, it will be the best way for you and me to come to an understanding. Somebody else had her suspicions too. It was Mrs. Simcox, the nurse, who recommended me."

Ida bent her head, and shaded her face with one hand, listening.

"Mrs. Pemberton is the best woman in the world," said Mrs. Simcox to me, "and her step-daughter is behaving ill to her, and I have a notion she has been put up to it by the man who was here when Mr. Randall died—by Mr. Geoffrey Dale."

Ida did not speak, or look up, when Bessy West paused to observe the effect of her words upon her.

"Mrs. Simcox knew that Mr. Dale was no stranger to me, and that I had the best of reasons for knowing that he would not lead any one right; but I told her, if he had been making any mischief out of the time he had been at your father's house, it would not be likely to last, for that he was gone back to England, or going very soon. I knew that, or at least I believed it, and so she need not fret."

"How did you know it?"

"I will come to that in time. Mrs. Simcox said: 'Then he's gone to England to wait for her there, like a spider for a fly; for I'm sure and certain it's that man and nobody else that has altered Miss Ida to her step-mother.' I thought that was very likely to be his plan, but I did not much care about it, for Mrs. Pemberton was going to take me to England with her, and when I got there I could easily upset his game. Then came Mrs. Pemberton's illness, and the delay about going to England, and I did not think much about you, to tell you the truth, because I loved her with all my heart, and I had enough to think of, with her and the child, and my own troubles. But when I did think about you, I was more and more sure it was some man that was in the place you were thinking of."

How vividly the remembrance came to Ida's mind of the day on which Bessy West had come to look for her with a message from Mrs. Pemberton, only a moment after Geoffrey Dale had quitted her side. If she had seen him there! What had she to tell that might influence events?

"We sailed. And then, I own, I watched you, Miss Pemberton. You were so miserable, you moped so much,

that I could not be mistaken; you were not going to meet any one you cared for; the man you were thinking of had been left behind."

Ida looked up now, and her cheeks were a deep red. A light was dawning upon her, bringing humiliation with it.

"Go on," she said.

"I could not make it out, altogether. I wondered why you consented to go to England if you did not like it; then I thought it might be settled between you and him on account of your father's will. Of course I never heard a word from you or Mrs. Pemberton to tell me anything; and, to tell the truth again, I did not care. Though you were very good, and almost all you ought to be to my dear mistress on the voyage,"—Ida liked the honesty of that "almost"—"I used to like to think that she would soon be with kind friends, and have other people to think of and depend on, besides you."

"Hush, hush!" said Ida, putting out her hand imploringly; "I have suffered enough."

"So I think," said Bessy West, "and she would not thank me for grieving you. I need not tell you much more about that time. When she was gone, and the baby was gone, I had nothing more to care about; I had no more to do with you and your affairs. You did not want me, and I did not want you after we were safe in England; and when I thought at all about it, I still thought the man you were fretting about was in the colony. But I knew you were your own mistress now, and could hurt nobody but yourself."

"You felt very hardly towards me."

"I did. I mostly feel hard towards every one. My life has made me hard; but if my dear mistress had been spared I would have been different. And now, Miss Pemberton, I will tell you the very last time I ever watched you or tried to find out anything at all about what was in your mind."

"Go on, go on!"

"It was when we were at the hotel at Plymouth. I watched you then; and the lowness of your spirits, the quiet weary ways of you, and your seeming not to care a bit about going home with your friends, made me quite certain that no one you cared for was waiting for you in England. You remember when you first saw your cousin Mr. Dwarries?"

"I remember."

"I thought nothing at all of that. You

might very well be upset then; there was so much to think of about the dead and gone; and, besides, I could not get over it on my own account. The next morning there came a letter for you. I took an opportunity of looking at the address and the postmark. They told me nothing: the writing I had never seen; the postmark made it plain that the letter was from some relative. I was quite satisfied. Of course I was also quite wrong."

Ida made a mute gesture of assent.

"After that time, Miss Pemberton, I thought no more about you—in that way, at least. I was going to Ireland, and I turned my thoughts to the people I was going to. Mrs. Simcox has a great many relations in Ireland; they don't boast of her, though they might; and when she recommended me to her nephew and his wife, they were kind to me. They don't like me to talk about Mrs. Simcox to any one, and no one except yourself need ever be the wiser. I think the major ought to be proud of her, but that is not his opinion, or his wife's; and it is not my business to go against them. It is odd that the only person in England who knew—I mean you, Miss Pemberton—should be living here."

"Why did they take you into their employment?"

"Partly because they are both kind people, partly because they thought I should suit, and partly because it was the best way to make me hold my tongue. If it had come out in Tralee that Captain Simcox had an aunt who was a hired nurse in the colonies, no one but myself could possibly have been to blame; and they would have my punishment in their own hands. We made no bargain, but I think they understood that there was one. They are very kind to me; I do my duty by them, so long as it lasts. They need never know that you know anything about them, if you think it better."

"Yes, yes," assented Ida, "I think it would be much better. But, pray go on, and tell me why you come to do me a service now."

Bessy West's face softened; she looked with pity and some kindness at Ida.

"Because, when I heard what they said in the town—what I have already told you—I understood it all in a minute; I saw that I had been mistaken—wrong all through; and then the recollection of my dear dead mistress came to me, and I said to myself, 'I will do all I can, for her sake, to save Miss Pemberton.' I did not

forget that she saved you from the fire and the sea. If I had not persuaded myself of what wasn't the case, the truth would have been found out before. I heard the talk the first evening at Mrs. Lipscomb's, and I sent to ask you to see me."

"I did not get the message until I came in last night. Clark thought it of no consequence, I suppose."

"I had put it on wanting the things of mine that were among the luggage. It was just as well, for the delay made me quite certain. It was only a sharp guess at first, but I know all about it now; and if you will let bygones be bygones, Miss Pemberton, and trust me, I think—indeed, I know—I can serve you more than anyone in the world can serve you."

She moved nearer to Ida, who held out her hand, and said:

"Indeed, indeed I will trust you. Sit here, beside me, and I will tell you the truth. Geoffrey Dale did not go to England. I saw him, without Mrs. Pemberton's knowledge, at my old home; I promised to marry him; he was to have come to England in the ship with us; he was actually among the crowd when we went on board, but he changed his mind at the last moment."

"He was among the crowd! Could he see us—Mrs. Pemberton, I mean, and myself?"

"Yes, certainly, why?"

"Never mind just now. I understand why he changed his mind, and you will understand presently."

"The letter you saw was from him. He claims me; he holds me cruelly to my promise."

"I know that, I know that. And you—you have cured yourself of your folly; you don't want to marry him? You want to escape from him?"

"I want," said Ida, bursting into tears, "never to see his face again. I am wretched. It was childish folly, and I knew before I reached England at all, that I had made a terrible mistake. But I know it better and better every day since."

"And you see no way out of it, Miss Pemberton?"

"Only a very painful way; but I must take it. If I marry him without the consent of Mr. Dwarries, I forfeit all my fortune. He will not want to marry me under such circumstances."

"And who gets the money?"

"Mr. Dwarries."

"He is a very honourable, good man, is he not?"

"He is indeed."

Bessy West smiled at some thought passing through her mind. "I see you are quite safe," she said, "from what I was afraid of. I came here thinking I might have a great deal of trouble in saving you against your own will, because I believed you were fond of him. But now, it is only a question of money. He cannot force you to marry him if you do not choose to do it; but you don't know Geoffrey Dale if you think he will be got rid of quite simply. He is very hard, and obstinate, and cruel."

"I know that, right well."

"He will make Mr. Dwarria, or you, pay a big price to get rid of him, for he will make out that Mr. Dwarria has everything to gain. You see that, Miss Pemberton? An honourable gentleman would not like that."

"Certainly he would not; but, when I confess everything to my uncle, I think he will not care what may be said of himself. But never mind that. Tell me how you can help me."

"I can help you more than anything you can tell him about money can help you."

She rose and took a pair of scissors from Ida's dressing-table, cut the stout string with which the parcel that had lain so long unclaimed among Mrs. Pemberton's luggage was tied up, broke the seals, and displayed to Ida's eyes, following her movements with eager interest, a few books in gaudy bindings, a parcel of papers with a broad ribbon pinned round them, and a small flat tin box, like an artist's colour-box.

Laying the other articles aside, Bessy West raised the lid of the box. A folded slip of paper, resting on a faded scrap of green baize, formed its sole contents. She took the slip of paper out, unfolded it, and handed it to Ida, who saw that it was written over in a few regular lines.

"Copy that accurately, Miss Pemberton," said Bessy West, "and enclose the copy in your letter. I do not think you, or I either, are likely to hear much, for the future, of Geoffrey Dale."

The interview between Ida and her former attendant lasted some time longer; and was terminated by Audrey's coming to inquire whether Ida would go down to luncheon. Bessy West took her leave.

Madeleine had been on her rounds before coming to the Dingle House, and she and Audrey had plenty to talk of; but

she observed Ida's silence and depression. Audrey saw this, and exerted herself to shelter Ida from question or remark. Shortly after luncheon Lord Barr came in; and it struck Madeleine that he too was in less good spirits than usual.

He had some news for the young ladies.

"Frank has got a new patient," said Lord Barr, addressing the intelligence to Audrey, as the person chiefly interested, "and such an unexpected one. Guess"

But nobody would take the trouble to guess.

"Mr. Conybeare. I believe it is not within the memory of the oldest inhabitant that he was ever ill before; but he is ill now—gout I believe—the consequence of low-cut shoes, Miss Kindersley; and Frank had just gone down to the bank when I looked in just now. I wonder what sort of patient the Bear makes."

"Oh, I'm so sorry I ever called him a bear," said Madeleine, with ready penitence. "I suppose papa knows; this will distress him."

"But it need not. Gout does not signify, you know. There are people who say it does you good, but I don't believe that. Frank will put him all right."

The talk among the young people flagged; Ida's silence and low spirit were infectious, and she could not shake them off.

Audrey proposed a walk, and Lord Barr offered to accompany the girls. But Ida pleaded headache, and remained at home. Left alone, she returned to her room and sat there thinking over the incidents of the morning, of the time when she and Bessy West lived their lives in each other's presence, and no accident had revealed the link between them. Her mind was very weary; the crisis of her fate had come, and she was awaiting it stupidly. The tin box belonging to Bessy West was lying on the table. Ida took it up and examined it idly; her attention was caught by some words scratched on the japanned lid. They were, "Mary Ronald, June 10."

"That was Mary's name," thought Ida. "I suppose she gave the box to Bessy West; but I never saw it before."

Mr. Geoffrey Dale hated to be beaten. Even when the game he was engaged in playing was not charged with important results he abhorred defeat, and felt the deadliest enmity against a successful antagonist. He had never played a game which interested him more, nor which he was more doggedly determined to win,

than this one in which the happiness of Ida Pemberton was at stake. It had a fascination for him apart from the money value of the prize; for Geoffrey Dale had come to regard Ida with feelings which would readily ripen into hate. It was played, as it were, against the dead—the dead man who had offended him, the dead woman who had detected him—and the winning of it would mean triumph over them, a great revenge for a slight which had filled him with rage. Everything combined to lend this game a zest hitherto unknown to him; and more than any other ingredients in the flavouring of it were the girl's reluctant misery, her penitent, ashamed distaste to him, her timid efforts to convince him, and escape. As if he needed conviction! As if he meant her to escape!

When we see Geoffrey Dale again—having taken leave of him last at the Antipodes—we find him in an excellent state of mind. It is on the day after the despatch of his letter to Ida Pemberton—that letter which roused the girl, desperate and defenceless as she felt, to the very last action which Geoffrey Dale could have anticipated—the taking of a third person into her confidence. He is perfectly content with the letter, and also in other respects. Geoffrey Dale was not so reckless as most adventurers, even of the smaller kinds. He did not give too much time to, or reckon exclusively upon, one particular scheme; he “kept his hand in,” as the saying is, as popularly adapted to the keeping of people's hands in other people's pockets. He did not pretend to the heroics of villainy only. He was capable of crime, no doubt, but also of bestowing undeviating attention and industry upon smaller knaveries; and these inter-complementary faculties had acquired vigour and ease since the episode of Edward Randall. He had been for some time engaged in effecting the ruin of a “friend” of his, who had lent himself to the process with fatal facility; but it was nearly complete, and Mr. Dale felt that the hour was approaching when he must consolidate his position, as serious commercial rogues designate the accomplishment of some supreme roguery. And Ida Pemberton thought her childish folly could turn him from his purpose! He laughed at the folly while he cursed the fool.

Mr. Geoffrey Dale intended to entertain

a select party of friends at supper, on the evening of the day after that on which we resume our acquaintance with him, the “friend” above mentioned included; and he was thinking, pleasantly enough, of the very different style in which he should do things when he should have frightened the deceased “Samaritan's” daughter into marrying him, when a letter from Ida Pemberton was brought to him. He broke the seal with a frowning face; he did not like this writing again so promptly. It looked like struggle, and he had counted on submission. Something was enclosed in the letter, but he threw it aside, without looking at it, and read the plain, straightforward words in which Ida told him that she had revealed everything, except the time and place of their meetings, to Lady Olive Despard, and had learned from her the fact which set her free—the fact of the will by which Mrs. Pemberton deprived her of any share in her father's fortune, if she should marry Geoffrey Dale. It was a simple announcement, and farewell; and it drove him more frantic with rage than any defiance could have done. Pale, with glowing eyes, Geoffrey Dale read and re-read the girl's words, with a resolve to be revenged upon her in some other way, if indeed she had been delivered out of his hand in this. At length he bethought him of the enclosure. It was a half sheet of paper, containing a slip with writing on it. The words on the half sheet were:

“I had finished my letter before the enclosed reached me. Now I know why you did not sail in the Albatross, and whose face it was that warned you. For her sake I will keep this secret also, on condition that I never see you again, or hear of you directly.”

Geoffrey Dale looked at the slip of paper enclosed, and ground his teeth. Then he calmed himself by a great effort, and fell a-thinking. His fit of cogitation lasted nearly an hour, after which he burned Ida's letter and its enclosure, and wrote a brief peremptory summons to his friend.

On the 12th of August will be published
THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

By JAMES PAYN,

Author of “Lost Sir Massingberd,” “At Her Mercy,” “Halves,” &c., entitled,

“WHAT HE COST HER.”

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.